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ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 130907Z FEB 08
FM AMEMBASSY NICOSIA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 8558
INFO RUEHTH/AMEMBASSY ATHENS 3980
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA 5130
RUEHLB/AMEMBASSY BEIRUT 4290

UNCLAS NICOSIA 000103

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR NEA/ ELA ANN SOMERSET, MATTHEW IRWIN, ALLISON MONZ

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KDEM](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [EFIN](#) [EINV](#) [CY](#)

SUBJECT: CYPRUS SUPPORTS LEBANON, BUT WON'T ISSUE PUBLIC STATEMENTS ABOUT SYRIA OR IRAN OR CEASE TRAVEL TO SYRIA

REF: SECSTATE 10786

¶1. Per reftel, PolOff on February 11 demarched MFA Middle East Desk Officer Dionysis Dionysiou to request urgent Cypriot support for Lebanon and to urge the RoC to condemn publicly Iran and Syria's interference there. In response, Dionysiou promised to forward to appropriate MFA officials our specific request that the RoC contribute to the Special Tribunal for Lebanon, and commented favorably on the initiative. He outlined prior Cypriot contributions to Lebanon, which he deemed significant; the RoC in 2007-08 had disbursed 1 million USD for development assistance under the UN Habitat program, and 20,000 USD in assistance to the LAF. Dionysiou was non-committal regarding possible RoC grants to Lebanon to help cover foreign debt payments, however.

¶3. Turning to other elements of the demarche, Dionysiou noted that the RoC did not intend to issue public statements condemning Syrian and Iranian interference in Lebanon, nor would it implement a ban on senior-level travel to Syria. He claimed that allegations that those countries were meddling in Lebanon were "unproven." As such, the RoC would stick to a more generic "no interference by neighboring countries" admonition when issuing public statements about Lebanon. It was important to keep the dialogue open with Syria and Iran, Dionysiou concluded, and banning travel there was not constructive.

SCHLICHER